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BOOK REVIEWS.

EVERY book that is translated from an unfamiliar language to our own is a benefit to us, the effect or influence of which it is impossible to measure with any certainty. We are too apt, in our conception of a foreign or an alien people, to be influenced by their contiguity to us geographically. The characteristics of the English, the French, the Germans, are perfectly familiar to us, for we visit their countries, we realize that their thoughts, their actions, their conceptions, are practically the same as ours; and, consequently, we lose sight of the mysterious in connection with them. The Italians we know less of; and, naturally, we credit them with likes and dislikes, aspirations, ambitions, different from our own. When our mind travels to Russia, and we endeavor to picture the character of the native, we are so impressed by the false consciousness of their entire and absolute dissimilarity to ourselves, that we conclude, without a moment's thought, that comparison is quite out of the question. When we reach Asia, China, and the far Eastern countries, in our minds, this lack of appreciation of an intelligence and an understanding, of humane and common sense instincts and purposes, equal in every respect to our own, becomes more marked, and we surround the Chinese and Japanese with a wall of mystery concerning their personal traits, that separates them absolutely and completely from anything familiar to us in human kind. This error prompts and perpetuates foreign missions, and similar proselyting efforts, to teach a people who are in all ways equal, and in numerous channels vastly superior, to the teachers.

The best way to understand the true national character of a people is to gather it from the conversation of the children one meets in the public streets or parks—to catch the chance words from passing natives, especially those of the middle classes; but this presupposes and requires an intimacy with the language; and when one possesses no such knowledge, the next best tutor is an intelligent translation of a generally recognized book by a native author—a book, preferably, that has an exclusively local application and interest, which deals with the life and customs and habits of the people, of the ordinary people; for the higher classes, the exceptionally educated, do not materially differ one from another, whatever section they may be from, whether it be New York or the antipodes.

This brings us back to our original proposition, that every worthy translation is a benefit to us; and it likewise brings us to a contemplation of Mr. Edward Greely's latest Japanese romance, founded upon (for Mr. Greely has done much more than merely translate) the work of Bakin, and entitled, "A Captive of Love."

The story is the personification of an ideal. The author pictured to himself the natural tendencies of human nature; he took an ordinary soul, and found a corporeal habitation for it; then he exposed the soul to the blandishment of woman, and it became a captive to Love; and the same instincts that made it possible for femininity to impress also opened it to the assaults of avarice, and this led to theft, deception, and their consequent evils, visited upon other and innocent souls. The personified soul is named Saikel, the son of a hunter, a class held in something approaching contempt by the Japanese as being the slayers of animals, who, displaying a spirit of mildness and a disposition for learning, is taken by his associate villagers to the temple of Cho-Ko, where he evidenced such learning as rapidly to advance him in the esteem of his superior, the Living-Master. Transferred to another temple, he attracts attention and enmity by his attainments (the similarity between Japanese and Caucasians is remarked in this incident), mortifies his flesh, repeats his *Namias*, and does everything that the *Shin* religion requires of its devotees. His handsome face excites the notice of Hachisuba, a *koto*-player, and he falls—just like an American. Then the downward path is glided for his convenience, and he descends with wonderful celerity.

There are some pathetic incidents introduced, and an example of filial piety, revenge, or more properly, the vendetta, is evidently an attribute of filial devotion among the Japanese, as the children of the man who bought the ox stolen by the priest ultimately kill the thief for his temerity in selling the ox, and are applauded for it.

But the plot, interesting though it certainly is, does not give the volume its real value; it is the picture drawn for us of Japanese life, of their customs, their superstitions, their shrewdness, their home habits; it demonstrates the power of the priests, and their unworthiness to possess it; it shows these and a score of other similitudes between our life and their life. We learn their customary conversations, their exchange of ideas, their mode of expression; we come across many pithy paragraphs expressing thoughts we have considered our own: "Children who honor their parents are favored by the gods, and respected by the world;" "Human nature is very perverse;" "Neither believe in a *bou* (priest) or his doctrine until you are thoroughly acquainted with both;" "A blind man will lead a thousand persons who are similarly afflicted, and none of them will know whether they are going;" "all of which are as true in English as they are in Japanese."

The book is quaintly written, and gives the reader a clearer and more comprehensive idea of Japanese manners than any previous work we have had the privilege of reading. With this, and the other writings of Mr. Greely upon the like sub-

ject, there is hardly any need of visiting Japan; one can see the people in the printed pages. (Lee & Shepard, Boston.)

THERE is so much art and ingenuity shown in the advertising schemes of the day, that the resources of imagination must be drawn upon largely, or something of practical general use given, in order to attract even passing attention from the public. A pamphlet of sixty-seven pages, intended primarily as an advertising medium for Burnet's flavoring extracts, entitled "Household Receipts," has been sent us, and we find in it very many recipes for desserts and other toothsome fancy dishes, provocative of pleasure and dyspepsia, that certainly should, and doubtless will, be of no inconsiderable value to the housekeeper. The majority of these dishes, it is true, are to embrace one or another of Burnet's extracts, but we have no doubt these particular extracts are just as good and as wholesome as any others, and we do not therefore see any reason for objecting to that provision. To our unpracticed culinary understanding, however, we would suggest that directions for the concoction of savory puddings and such should be given in the plainest manner. The most of these recipes, we notice, call for a pint of this, or so many ounces of something else, necessitating scales and measures, which, possibly, even every well-regulated *cuisine* does not possess. It would be simpler to give such measurements by the cupful or parts of a cup. (Joseph Burnet & Co., Boston.)

Messrs. Cassell & Co. (New York) have introduced a weekly publication, called *Cassell's National Library*, edited by Prof. Henry Morley, issued Saturdays; price, ten cents per volume. The form is that of a small paper-covered book of from 150 to 200 pages, printed in good, plain type, on good, plain paper. The first number contains Silvio Pellico's story of "My Ten Years' Imprisonment," the recital of his confinement in an Italian prison for the crime of being one of the *Carbonari*. The story is a peculiar and an interesting one, having its singular and its prosaic incidents. As an example of Italian style, and a reflex of Italian thought and manners at that time, it is well worth reading.

There are several other volumes now ready, noticeably Byron's *Childe Harold*, Hallam's *History of Europe*, Isaac Wal-

into the front rank of those who are making our best American fiction. There are comparatively few signs of immaturity; there are none where real strength in the treatment of passion it required. Here is the realism which Mr. Howells is master of, but here is also the constructing imagination which weaves into realism all the finer issues of life. The subordinate characters are not wall figures, but the strength of the story is so greatly concentrated in Margaret, they lose their radiance in comparison with her own."

THE slave days, and what we may call an American caste resulting therefrom, have served as the subject matter of a great number of novels, romances and tales of life in our country, while the plots, the situations and the denouements, seem to be inexhaustible. The latest is entitled "Without Blemish, To-Day's Problem," written by Mrs. J. H. Walworth, and published by Cassell & Co. It is a plain story of Southern life, immediately after the war. The love of a widowed mother for her son is the key note of the plot, and her efforts, after sending him abroad to be educated, to retain possession of her old home and an income sufficient to support the young man properly upon his return, makes an interesting and pathetic narrative. The taint of colored blood is enlarged upon, and its social effect on those whose veins are corrupted by it.

PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY, by Simon Newcomb, LL.D., professor in the Johns Hopkins University. Published by Harper & Brothers, New York.

Whoever would form an intelligent idea of those causes which vitally affect the civilization, advancement and welfare of nations, must study, under some scientific method, the real status of almost every industry, either individually or as to their united powers; for it is the industries of a people which determine most absolutely their development from barbarism and crudity to general cultivation and refinement. The manner in which they work the fields of nature, and the benefits they draw from her ever-fruitful bosom, regulate, in manifold ways and through myriads of differences, the whole destiny of a people. The study of these differences, their causes, their tendencies, their legitimate results, has been given the name of "Political Economy"; and so necessary has this study become, whereby to formulate, on some reliable basis, a series of data, as it were, which men can build upon in following out their respective vocations, that books sufficient to endow a library have been written on a subject ever new, ever open to fresher ideas and later deductions, and possessing an interest which appeals to every intelligent or thinking person engaged in the active pursuits of life.

Nor does the practicality of political economy alone lend its profound conclusions a vivid interest to those who may benefit directly by its rules of averages. Although the business man may turn its leaves with a view to personal instruction as to his importations, his investments, his chances in speculation, or the probabilities of success in some long-laid scheme for accumulation of wealth, founded on its general conclusions, the wisely-compounded volume, rich with the experience of millions who have unconsciously wrought out principles of action for unborn generations, while they individually toiled for their daily bread, is something more than an oracle of affairs to be consulted by the ambitious employer of labor or the trader in the world's most needed supplies.

To the eyes of one who calmly and philosophically notes the slow

evolution of the human race—its gradual advances, its vicissitudes, its enormous waste of energies, its tremendous powers put forth so blindly, yet ending so felicitously in an ever-onward and upward tendency—the knowledge of this grand subject opens a page whose story is the murmur of a world of being, never ceasing in activity, intensely straining after the best good, putting the elements beneath the feet, enthroning the intellect above all matter, enchainning the secret forces of invisible nature, and making the very universe to serve its will, and guide its tiny vessels into havens of rest. But, in this age, the cry is, "Condense, condense!" We have no time to read the history of what makes up the present. We ask for facts as they are, and demand to know what shall be the outcome of those facts, in the fewest words, the briefest dissertations. In the volume above mentioned, the author seems to have answered this cry with admirable skill. With a grasp which takes the whole wide series of deductions which have arisen from the close observation of students of many subjects and classes of subjects, he has given us the gist, the pith, the necessary kernel of truth, which has grown and rounded from every stream of sap into the meat of the shell. The flavor of the work is appetizing, ripe, fresh and rich with the oil and essence of all that goes to make the topic worthy. It is the inner fruit of the tree of knowledge, the sweet intellectual harvest from the dry branch of statistical information.

Arranged by numbered paragraphs, each treating in a masterly way the topic under consideration, it calls upon the memory, the personal thought, the reason and the imagination of the reader, by means of questions placed at the end of every portion, thus enabling one to make a comprehensive review.

Consisting of five books, divided into appropriate chapters, it is accompanied by a careful index, which instantly turns the searcher to his desired page, and written with all the ease and grace which belong to the essayist and the rhetorician, it needs make no apology (and it does not) for the supposed "dry-as-dust" matter it contains. Certainly, we can no more fully recommend this fortunate volume than to say that it has held our attention to the end, with somewhat of the fascination which appertains to a literature devoted rather to the social than the monetary relations of our kind.



"HACHISUBA NEVER ONCE REMOVED HER EYES FROM HIS FACE."—CAPTIVE OF LOVE, PAGE 142.

ton's *Angler*, and selections from Bacon, Sheridan, Plutarch, Herodotus, and others. The purpose, as shown by these titles, is to reprint the best-known and most popular of the standard and classical works, and this will doubtless be well received by the reading public.

"Paris, in Old and Present Times, with Special Reference to Changes in Its Architecture and Topography," is the title of a 230-page volume, written by Philip Gilbert Hamerton, and published in rich form by Roberts Brothers, Boston. It is a well and entertainingly-written history of the city of Paris, from its very earliest settlement to the present day. The illustrations are profuse and explanatory, showing the appearance of familiar buildings or locations at the different periods of the city's existence. The text, to one who has been in Paris, recalls much that is of value, and, by tracing the growth and changes of places with which he is acquainted, makes very pleasant reading.

The book is beautifully bound and printed.

"ARCHITECTURAL STUDIES," part 3, thirteen designs for stables, edited by F. A. Wright, and published by Wm. T. Comstock, is just what its name implies, and fills its place admirably. There are designs for small and large stables suitable to country places, the city being entirely ignored, perhaps because there is not so good an opportunity for an architect to display his ornamental powers on a city place. The book consists of separate plates, and sells for \$1, postage free.

"THE STORY OF MARGARET KENT," by Henry Hayes, 1 vol., 12 mo, \$1.50, Ticknor & Co., Boston. The *Boston Herald* of Jan. 13, says:

"The story of Margaret Kent," which now asks to be received into the higher class of imaginative writing, is more than any recent American novel a venture into the high realm of fiction. The character of Margaret Kent is a masterpiece of its kind. It is a fresh creation. The type is southern, and yet American, and its inner fiber is womanly to the core. . . . Whoever the unknown magician may be, she has leaped at a bound